

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Administrator Gina McCarthy
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C., 20460

May 4, 2016

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

Following the recent discovery by the City of Newburgh, New York of Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) contamination in two local bodies of water, I strongly urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use its technical expertise to quickly assist the community in testing their water for PFOS contamination. I encourage the EPA to assist Newburgh in determining the source of this PFOS contamination and to help them devise a remediation plan. In addition, it is critical that EPA releases an updated safety standard for PFOA and PFOS immediately, as the EPA has promised it would do so by spring of 2016.

In light of the recent news that the city has declared a water emergency due to the detection of elevated levels of PFOS in both Silver Stream and Washington Lake, I am requesting that EPA use their experience and resources to expeditiously help the community test all relevant water within the community and water system to help identify the extent of the contamination and determine its source.

Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) is a man-made chemical that was commonly used in a wide variety of commercial and consumer products. PFOS is extremely persistent in the environment and resistant to natural forms of environmental degradation. The toxicity and bioaccumulation potential of PFOA can pose a serious risk to human health, which makes its presence in two Newburgh water bodies most concerning. This high level of contamination must be remediated as soon as possible in order to ensure the health and safety of the community. With the EPA's technical expertise and experience in dealing with drinking water contamination, I request that you immediately provide technical support to help the community investigate the full scope of the problem and assist with subsequent remediation as quickly as possible.

This development has cast considerable concern and created great uncertainty for the Newburgh community, with the potential impacts ranging from human health to the local economy. It is imperative that this uncertainty be quickly addressed by quickly identifying the scope of the problem and speedily implementing an effective remediation plan.

Again, I appreciate your work in protecting our nation's health and the quality of our drinking water. Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator


Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator


SEAN PATRICK MALONEY
Member of Congress